

ISO 14001 ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS (4.3.3)

After the list of Significant Environmental Aspects has been assembled the environmental management system requires that an organization establish its documented Environmental Objectives and Targets. Two definitions should be reviewed at this point:

"3.7 -- Environmental Objective

Overall environmental goal, arising from the environmental policy, that an organization sets itself to achieve, and which is quantifiable where practicable."

These are the specific goals that are necessary to implement the environmental policy. There should be a correlation between the list of significant environmental aspect(s) and the environmental objective(s). The environmental objective should be quantifiable and measurable.

and

"3.10 -- Environmental Target

Detailed performance requirement quantified where practicable, applicable to the organization or parts thereof, that arises from the environmental objectives and that needs to be set and met in order to achieve those objectives."

An environmental target is a specific task in the achievement of an environmental objective. Environmental targets must be stated in a measurable and quantifiable manner.

As stated above Environmental Objectives are essentially "goals" that are established to meet the "vision" statement of the organization. The Environmental Policy (4.2) statement is the "vision" statement of the organization. In order to meet the Environmental Objective or "goal" a detailed "workplan" needs to be established. The "detailed" workplan is made up of one or more Environmental Targets. ISO 14001 requires that the objectives and targets contain quantifiable performance and schedules. In other words the commitments of the Environmental Policy statement and the Environmental Objectives must be translated into detailed plans and time frames which are designed to achieve the commitments of the policy. Every level of the organization must be examined for inclusion in order to develop complete and effective Environmental Targets. ISO 14001 requires that the organization must have documented the Environmental Objectives and Targets.

There are four distinct requirements contained within this section of ISO 14001. First, the organization must consider the results enumerated from the Legal and Other Requirements (4.3.2) section. Second, the organization must utilize the list of Significant Environmental Aspects delineated in the Environmental Aspects (4.3.1) section of the standard. Third, the organization must follow the prevention of pollution commitment that is a content requirement of the Environmental Policy (4.2) statement. Finally, the

organization must ensure that the views of interested parties are considered. These four topics drive the design and construction of the Environmental Objectives and Targets.

Content Requirements of Environmental Objectives and Targets

- consider material developed in legal and other requirements section
- consider the significant environmental aspects
- utilize prevention of pollution where applicable
- consider views of interested parties

Consider Legal and Other Requirements

A reasonable minimum position is that an objective be established for any products, services and/or activities that do not comply with existing applicable environmental laws and regulations. However, a more appropriate position might be to establish an overall objective for all the applicable environmental laws and regulations and their corresponding requirements. That overall objective could then be subdivided for the purpose of setting specific individual targets. There is no requirement within ISO 14001 to go beyond the requirements of the applicable environmental laws and regulations. Once compliance with a certain requirement is met, the objective and associated target could be modified to require maintenance at that level.

Consider Significant Environmental Aspects

Once Legal and Other Requirements have been addressed the list of Significant Environmental Aspects provides the next basis for establishing objectives and targets. No requirement exists in ISO 14001 that every Significant Environmental Aspect must have an established an objective and target. However, the organization must be able to show that it reviewed and evaluated every Significant Environmental Aspect in the process of establishing its objective and targets. If a Significant Environmental Aspect is not carried forward to the objective level the organization must provide a plausible and rational position. The potentially acceptable reasons include financial resources and technology. Financial resource limitations may require an organization to prioritize its actions. Additionally technology may not be available to address the control of a specific Significant Environmental Aspect. In this case the organization might want to consider crafting an objective and target with the purpose of evaluating potential innovative technology to address this limitation.

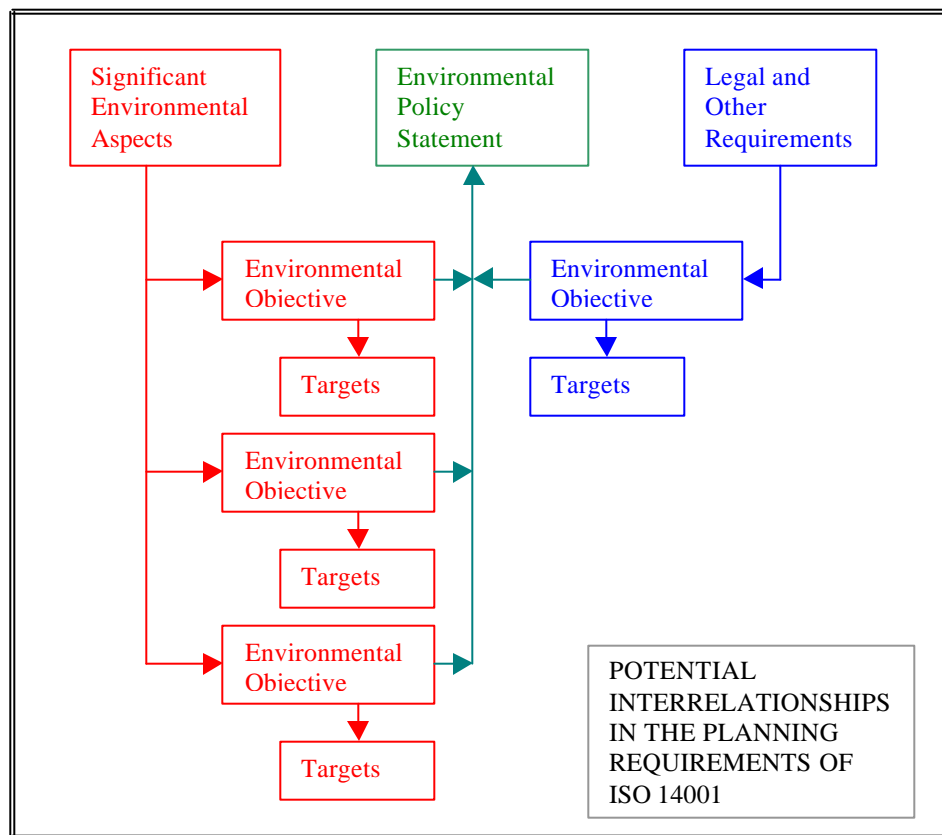
Prevention of Pollution

The requirement to include prevention of pollution concepts has its roots in the content requirements of the Environmental Policy (4.2) section. An organization does not have to employ the concept of prevention of pollution in the development of Environmental Targets. It only has to evaluate the concept of prevention of pollution as one of the alternative approaches for establishing and meeting the target requirements. If the prevention of pollution approach is not the most cost-effective approach, then it does not have to be employed in that instance.

Views of Interested Parties

The Communication (4.4.3) section of ISO 14001 requires that the organization develops and maintains a system for communicating with external parties. This requirement also requires that the organization have a process for considering their views. ISO 14001 does not require the organization to automatically include views of outside parties in the objective and target construction process. This is "**grey**" area within the standard. The organization will need to develop and maintain a process for accepting, evaluating and addressing outside comments.

Remember the Environmental Objectives are the "goals" that support the "vision" contained in the Environmental Policy statement.



Questions That Need To Be Answered

The following questions will need to be answered in order to determine whether the Environmental Objective and Target Section meets the intent of ISO 14001:

1. Did the organization utilize the following when established its objectives and targets:
 - legal and other requirements?
 - significant environmental aspects?
 - commitment to prevention of pollution?
 - views of interested parties?
2. Are there appropriate objectives and targets for every level of the organization?
3. Are the objectives and targets consistent with the Environmental Policy statement?
4. Are the objectives and targets documented?